

**TO: WA State Building Code Council**

**FROM: Interfaith Climate Action**

**Date October 6, 2022**

**TOPIC: Reducing gas-powered buildings for our health, our air, and the climate.**

Dear Members of the State Building Code Council:

Interfaith Climate Action (ICA) is writing to urge you to approve the proposed updates to the Washington State residential energy code to require that new homes be built with high efficiency heat pumps to heat and cool our spaces and water, and that cooking be done by electric stoves. Further, there should be increased ventilation requirements for kitchens that currently burn polluting gas.

Representing people from a range of faith communities, we are particularly concerned with the need to protect marginalized communities from the effects of fossil fuels and climate change. Over time, they have suffered more health-related problems from fossil fuels, and currently from climate change, than any other group.

From devastating floods and wildfires to unprecedented heat waves in our state, decision-makers at all levels of government **must** act to reduce climate-polluting emissions and make a pathway for a just transition off fossil fuels. Your Council has taken some important steps already, and we urge you to continue with your efforts.

Buildings are also a significant cause of illness and deaths because of the unhealthy air pollution associated with the combustion of methane. Recent studies show that homes with gas stoves have 50 percent to 400 percent higher nitrogen dioxide levels in their indoor air, compared to homes with electric and induction stoves. Nitrogen dioxide pollution can lead to health problems like heart failure and asthma, and just one hour of cooking on a gas stove produces nitrogen dioxide levels that would be illegal if found outdoors. Because of this significant pollution, children in homes with gas stoves have a 42 percent higher risk of developing asthma symptoms.

The proposed code updates ensure that as Washington grows and we construct new homes, we are creating healthy homes, staying grounded in equity and climate justice, and honoring the climate commitments made by the Governor and our Legislature. Washington is a climate leader — these building code changes are an obvious way to act on our commitments and help transition our homes to highly efficient heat pumps that can be powered by 100% clean and renewable energy.

Thank you for your consideration and your work on behalf of the state.

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